

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY

by Arnold
Petersen



Daniel

De Leon
Emancipator

Right can never be superior to the
economic development and the stage
of civilization conditioned thereby.

—*Karl Marx.*

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Capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons, established by the instrumentalities of things. ...What is a Negro slave? A man of the black race.. A Negro is a Negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A cotton-spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain conditions [that is, when owned privately and used to employ, i.e., exploit, workers] does it become capital. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold by itself is money, or as sugar is the price of sugar.

—KARL MARX.

I.

The Passion for Freedom.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the capitalist class, and of the capitalist State, they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overseer, and, above all, by the individual capitalist manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.—*Marx and Engels.*

Of all the cravings that possess man, the greatest is without a doubt the demand to be free, the passion to enjoy untrammelled existence. So overriding is this passion that men will even establish slavery in order to maintain freedom—for themselves, that is, and their particular ruling class. And those who enjoy such freedom—that is, freedom based on enslavement of the many—never fail to delude themselves that theirs is really a society of freemen.

We have the examples of ancient Athens and of our own country as typical of such delusions—or perhaps I should say pretenses. Athens was proclaimed a democracy—that is, a rule of the people—though four-fifths of its people were either totally enslaved, or otherwise denied the right to participate in the rule of the city-state. America was proclaimed the land of the free even while millions were in abject slavery,

cowering under the lash of the slave-driver. The sentiments of love of freedom uttered by members of the ruling classes were no doubt sincerely meant, but obviously they could have had meaning only to those who actually enjoyed freedom and class privileges. "It is precious above everything to live in a democracy," said the ancient Athenian lawgiver—precious, indeed, to him, though it is unlikely that the 365,000 slaves, plus the 45,000 other disfranchised Athenians, shared his sentiment! Equally difficult is it to imagine the American chattel slave being moved by the lofty sentiments of freedom and equality uttered by his master, or even by those who sincerely orated on the blessings of American democracy. And the pious protestations concerning "free enterprise" by our modern plutocrats leave the working class as a whole quite cold. Their exercise of free enterprise consists mainly in the "freedom" to quit one exploiting master for another, or the "freedom" to starve in the ranks of the unemployed.

Ruling classes everywhere and at all times are blinded by their property interests—the possession of property on which rests their rule and power, made possible solely by the existence of some form of slavery. The consequence of this blindness is generally a dual personality. On the one hand, the liberty-loving person who will speak feelingly of freedom, and who will strenuously fight for it. On the other hand, the same person who will keep in subjection—absolute or relative—thousands who slave or work for his benefit, and who finds it difficult to understand that he is not regarded as a benefactor of his exploited victims.

Richard Hildreth, a keen pre-Civil War American historian now all but forgotten, wrote a book more

than 100 years ago, entitled "Despotism in America."* In this penetrating study of the American slavocracy, he commented shrewdly on this class-blindness and dual personality even among the most outstanding revolutionary fathers. Pointing to Jefferson's noble democratic creed, his lofty preachments of equalitarian principles, he called attention to the fact that Jefferson nonetheless was "all his life the tyrant of a plantation," maintaining a rule and authority which he himself described as "a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions,—the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other." Hildreth added: "Like [Patrick] Henry and Washington....though he [Jefferson] acknowledged the trampled rights and crying wrongs of the disenfranchised half of his fellow countrymen, he yet despaired to make any impression upon the ignorance, the prejudices, the blind and narrow self-interest of the privileged class, and he contented himself with now and then a protest against a system of tyrannical usurpation, which.....he still continued to uphold through the support of his own example."

As Lincoln, with great insight, observed: "The property basis will have its weight. The love of property and a consciousness of right or wrong have conflicting places in our organization, which often make a man's course seem crooked, his course a riddle."

*Richard Hildreth, American journalist and historian. American Consul at Trieste, 1861. Born, Dearfield, Mass., June 28, 1807. Died, Florence, Italy, July 11, 1865.

"The influence of slavery on our government has received its profoundest philosophical investigation from the pen of Richard Hildreth, in his invaluable essay on 'Despotism in America'—a work which deserves a place by the side of the ablest political disquisitions of any age."—Wendell Phillips, in "The Philosophy of the Abolition Movement."

"The democracy which he [Jefferson] preached at home," continued Hildreth, "was democracy among the aristocrats; and the perfect equality of all the members of the privileged order, has ever been a popular doctrine in all aristocracies."

Without entirely accepting all the implications of this observation as regards Thomas Jefferson himself, we may nevertheless consider Richard Hildreth's point well taken so far as it applies to leading representatives of ruling classes generally. The point is that so long as general libertarian and equalitarian principles benefit a ruling class, it will fight for them, and most ardently so. And in so doing it will identify its special class interests, and their ideological corollaries, with the interests of society as a whole. And the perfect equality that exists among the members of its own class is accepted, as a matter of course, as the only equality that matters, hence as general equality. Barring exceptional cases, members of such ruling classes would no more consider the equality concept violated by excluding their slaves, or the "lower orders," from it, than by excluding their horses and cattle.

Such ruling class elements will assume as a matter of course (as far as they give any thought to it) that what is good for their class interests is good for all, including specifically their subjects or slaves. Today, for instance, we are constantly sermonized, editorialized and politically harangued with the special plea that unless business prospers, unless the capitalists make good profits, the welfare of the rest—particularly the welfare of the wage-slave class—will suffer. Since the ruling class of today—the capitalist class—does not differ essentially from any previous ruling class, and inasmuch as ruling classes since time im-

memorial believed, or professed to believe, themselves animated by the loftiest motives, we may well believe that the members of the capitalist class of today also take their own preposterous claims seriously. All of which, however, does not stop them from presenting them with barrages of propaganda, and in terms of the most cunning euphemisms. And in resorting to euphemisms they again follow the pattern of previous ruling classes. Two thousand years ago Plutarch could write:

“The ancient Athenians used to cover up the ugliness of things with auspicious and kindly terms, giving them polite and endearing names. Thus they called harlots ‘companions,’ taxes ‘contributions,’ and the prison a ‘chamber.’”

And thus our present capitalist class, and the spokesmen of capitalist interests generally, call the wage-slave system of capitalism “free enterprise” — which it is anything but! Foreign aggression becomes “national defense,” and the national boundaries become so elastic that they stretch from here to the farthest Pacific on the one side, and to the Rhine banks, and points north, south and east of them, on the other side! Military conscription becomes “selective service,” or just military or physical training, while involuntary industrial servitude, or labor conscription, becomes “national service.” Defense of capitalist interests is considered a lofty and disinterested pursuit, but a truthful and scientific statement by Socialists concerning the undeniable wage-slave character of capitalism becomes agitation and propaganda — something which capitalist apologists, of course, never resort to! And so on and so forth. The selection of such fancy and misleading terms by the capi-

talists, these childish pretensions, constitute at once a tribute paid to the civilized part of man, and an acknowledgment of the fact that their social system, and the vicious schemes they attempt to put over, are of such "ugliness" that they need "polite and endearing names," and the pretense of righteous indignation, in order to meet with success at all.

But though ruling classes may deceive themselves, they will not forever fool their exploited victims. And it has even happened that out of the ranks of the ruling class there have emerged those who proved the mortal foes of ruling class interests—noble spirits who embraced the cause of the oppressed and the exploited of the earth, and who did so, not because to do so served the temporary interests of the ruling class whence they sprang, as in the cases of the American and French Revolutions, for instance, but, on the contrary, because to do so meant to wage war against those interests, and against the very social system from which those interests were inseparable. And such a noble spirit was the man whose ninety-third birthday anniversary we commemorate today, the outstanding American social scientist, the great Emancipator, Daniel De Leon.

II.

"The Great Emancipator."

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a....portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.—*Marx and Engels*.

I have deliberately designated De Leon "the great Emancipator," not just because I thought it sounded nice, but because I think it fits De Leon and his life's work perfectly. In this word, it seems to me, everything is summed up. Emancipation, working class emancipation, is the crowning act, the act which finally must justify the many and varied activities of De Leon. It is at once the aspiration and the consummation.

But there may be those who will object that the rightful American claimant of the title, "The Great Emancipator," is Abraham Lincoln. It is no detraction from the honor due Lincoln, nor a belittling of his noble life and achievement, to say that the term "Emancipator" is somewhat misapplied to him, and I am sure that Lincoln himself would agree. Lincoln's primary concern was not emancipation of the slaves, but the preservation of the Union. And when he finally issued the Emancipation Proclamation, it was not merely because he was at long last convinced that to emancipate the slaves by proclamation was the just,

the ethically and morally right thing to do, but because it was the expedient, the strategically and politically right thing to do.

For a long time Lincoln resisted the pressure of those who wanted him to issue an emancipation proclamation. It was not because he did not wish to free the slaves, but because he was convinced that the preservation of the Union was the primary condition for continued progress, including the eventual freeing of the slaves. His own words cannot be mistaken. In the famous letter he wrote to Horace Greeley on August 22, 1862, he said: "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that."

We have no quarrel with Lincoln on this point. The fact, however, remains that to him slavery, hence emancipation, was not the paramount question, and the fact does not affect his claim to greatness. Lincoln's greatness lies in the fact that he clearly perceived the fundamental issue of his age, and uncompromisingly rose to the great occasion. The Union and slavery were inextricably interrelated. The disruption of the Union would have meant the consolidation of slavery on this continent, with its corrupting effect on the North, apart from its deadening influence on the development of the South where slavery might have been continued for a long period of time. Vital as was the slavery issue, it was yet not *the* paramount issue at the outbreak of the Civil War, though it was presently to become so.

But the question of slavery—wage slavery—*was* and remained the paramount question with De Leon. No other question ever mattered. Solve that, and all other questions would be solved. Leave that question unsolved, and no matter what else was done, it would all be in vain. "The Union must be saved," cried Lincoln, and he was right. "Capitalism is not to be saved," insisted De Leon, and he was a thousand times right. He was right, not merely because wage slavery was a moral wrong, which it was and is; not merely because it spelled poverty and misery to the working class, which it did and does; not merely because it threw society into the convulsions of the class struggle, which it did and does; not merely because it created a fabulously wealthy minority on the one side, and an overwhelming mass of propertiless on the other, which was and is the consequence of the economic serfdom imposed on the workers; but above all because wage slavery—slavery of any kind—had become totally unnecessary in so far as social progress was concerned; and because capitalism, once an agency of social evolution, and a promoter of material progress, had become a hindrance, an obstacle to man's further progress, and a destroyer of his finer instincts and nobler aims, and because a continuation of capitalism would spell, can only spell, stark reaction; because it was forcing society, as it is doing increasingly today, back into a new "dark ages," with intensified slavery for all but the mere handful of plutocrats into whose possession and arbitrary control has come practically the entire wealth of the country.

In short, the point had been reached when there was no longer any real question of choices to be made if social progress were to continue. And when that

point is reached, revolution and emancipation of the oppressed class are the order of the day. But revolutions are not made to order, they are not the result of arbitrary whims or capricious impulses of emotionally overwrought or morally outraged persons.

Social revolutions, when they come, come in the fulness of time, and when all the material conditions for their success have been fulfilled. Moreover, they come, in the language of Marx, as a result of the pressure of forces which no longer can find outlets through channels within the framework of the old society; in short, they come because the old system has in actual fact ceased to function in accordance with its own life-principle, and because the new social life-principle (essential to civilized life and continued progress) cannot find application until the trammels of the old society have been removed. But even as revolutions are not made to order, neither can they be prevented by the arbitrary whim or designs of any individual or group. They may be delayed, or they may be hastened, but escaped they cannot be. It is, however, given to society, acting through the requisite numbers organized in accordance with the requirements of the revolution, and in conformity with the nature of the new society, to "shorten and lessen the birth pangs."

He who first perceived this in the country most favored by social evolution to initiate the new Socialist society, and who outlined the emancipation program, charted the course, and who dedicated his life to the preparation and education of the oppressed class, the class to be emancipated, and sacrificed his social and economic advantages and interests in behalf of the exploited workers, *he* is indeed true claimant to the noble title Emancipator. For just as it has been truly

and often said, that the name of Daniel De Leon has become synonymous with proletarian emancipation, so De Leonism, or American Marxian Socialism, represents the means, the methods, as well as the organizational principles applicable to the marshaling of the forces of emancipation, and requisite to the attainment of the goal itself. And working class emancipation being the supreme task of our time, the indispensable condition for all future progress, he who symbolizes and personifies this imperative and majestic goal, must be acknowledged as the Great, as the Supreme Emancipator.

It matters not in this connection that De Leon himself did not survive in the flesh to "proclaim" the emancipation of the wage slave. For one thing, the actual act of emancipation must, of course, be performed by the working class itself, and can be performed by no individual for that class. But, also, the act of emancipation will be, as it must be, on the basis of the principles of De Leonism. Hence, in that sense it will as truly be the "act" of De Leon as it truly crystallizes his principles and his life's work.

And, indeed, no man dies whose life-work survives him. It may not be wholly correct to say, as Emerson said, that institutions are the lengthened shadows of great men. They are that, but of course they are much more than that. But we *can* say that institutions, like great causes, are what they are because some one arose who could articulate for the inarticulate, and who could interpret, and express in crystal-clear terms, or, when necessary, in flaming and deed-stirring language, the needs and the mission of the enslaved class, and clearly outline the new goal, and correctly prescribe the means wherewith to achieve that goal.

Above all, someone who dared to speak out against the great wrong of the age, athwart the evil power of vested interests. And such a man was Daniel De Leon.

III.

The Struggle of the Oppressed Across the Ages.

The old war between the King and the Barons is well-nigh ended, and so is the war between the Barons and....landed capital and merchant capital. The business man has become the peer of my Lord. And now commences the new struggle between the operative and his employer, between wealth and labor.....No popular senator, or deputy, or peer seems to have any glimpse of it; but it is working in the hearts of the million, is struggling to shape itself, and one day it will be uttered, and in thunder tones. Well will it be for him who, on that day, shall be found ready to answer it.—*Orestes A. Brownson* (1840).

Not being moved primarily by sentiment, but being above all else motivated by his deep understanding of the historical rightness, the politico-economic soundness, and the sociologic timeliness of the proletarian emancipation cause, De Leon had, before anything else, asked himself the question: Why this cleavage, why this irreconcilable conflict, in modern society, in a so-called high stage of civilization? He had, in his mind's eye, witnessed similar cleavages, and similar class struggles, in the past. In his studies of history he had traced the story of the heroic rebellion of a Spartacus who, though slave, inspired a rebellion against a cruel and all-powerful master class, a rebellion which after more than two thousand years still stirs the imagination, quickens the pulse, and inspires the efforts of those who serve in the cause of the oppressed. Yet, Spartacus failed. De Leon had followed the struggles of the Gracchi brothers against the

brutal power of the Roman ruling class, noted their fated errors, and their eventual destruction.

Across the pages of history he had followed the trails of oppressors and oppressed, and noted that though ancient oppressions were overthrown, new and more sinister and powerful ones constantly arose, seemingly in endless, monotonous sameness. But he had also noted that after each recurrent struggle between masters and slaves, oppressors and oppressed, though the struggle and the stakes were seemingly the same, the setting was essentially different, and different in a hope-inspiring sense. The masters were still masters, the slaves still slaves, but they were masters and slaves in a greatly different way.

And he came to understand that no great struggle of an oppressed class for emancipation was ever a failure, whatever befell the individuals; that there was a widening of social horizons, a lifting of social skies, and a steady elevation of social terrain. He came to perceive clearly that there was a design in this scheme of things—that there was a continued and continuing process of evolution and revolution, ever recurrent, but ever enlargening. The cries of the oppressed were the same, their blood and their tears flowed as freely, and the cruel slavery imposed on them by a master class was as inhuman and unremitting as ever, the sighs and hopes of the enslaved for emancipation, or enlarged freedoms, as persistent the last time as at the beginnings of social and class struggles. And he saw liberators and class emancipators betrayed again and again, and often by the very slaves for whom they were giving their efforts, their very lives and all. And he saw would-be liberators betray those who had entrusted them with leadership.

But though disturbed, he was not deterred. And witnessing the class struggle in modern society, he understood that this was but one more, and, as he was soon to learn, the last in the long series of bitter struggles between oppressors and oppressed. And he set himself to the task of ascertaining the power of motion of these struggles, of discovering what they implied, and whither they were tending. And having once grasped the truth, and mastered the scientific facts underlying the whole mighty process, and having disciplined himself for the task, he dedicated himself without reserve or hesitation to the cause of working class emancipation from capitalist-imposed wage slavery.

De Leon understood, as we all clearly understand today, that it is not sufficient cause for emancipation that slavery and oppression exist. It is necessary also to prove that slavery at a particular time is morally wrong according to the standards of the particular age. Absolute slavery and serfdom are pronounced morally wrong by our present-day standards, but they were morally right according to the material possibilities and social-evolutionary necessity of their particular stages in social development. They were morally right because they were *socially necessary*. And they were socially necessary because without their existence society originally would have been unable to emerge out of the depths and stagnation of the primitive past.

As De Leon so masterfully demonstrated on so many occasions, the material conditions hitherto were lacking for that freedom and equality toward which the heart of man had ever yearned. The aspirations for freedom found no supporting basis in the material conditions at hand. "Today," he said, "today the heart and the hand are abreast of each other." The

instruments of freedom and equality, lacking in the past, are now at hand to give substance and reality to the undying aspirations and cravings for freedom which have stirred the race of man since the rule of property introduced human slavery. Plenty is producible for all; poverty and want need afflict none.

Hence slavery has become a moral wrong, as well as a social iniquity. Our modern slavery, wage slavery, is perhaps less oppressive in an outward physical sense as applied to the individual. But it is slavery nonetheless, a more subtle, a far more insidious, form of slavery than any that preceded it in the past, and one under which the enslaved are infinitely more dependent, economically, on their masters while wage slavery persists; hence a form of slavery under which the master (or the master class) is *de facto* far more powerful than any previous ruling class.

But, as said, wage slavery having become totally unnecessary in the further progress of the race, having become, in fact, an obstacle and hindrance to continued social progress, it has by the same token become the greatest moral wrong of the ages. And perceiving this, De Leon threw down his gauntlet and girded himself for the struggle against it. "He who does not fight a wrong," said De Leon, "condones it." Let me repeat that: "*He who does not fight a wrong, condones it.*" That was his challenge. It was also his motto. And it was at the same time an indictment of all those who professed sympathy with the cause of proletarian emancipation, and in their hearts condemned, but cynically refused to do anything to end, the evil and immoral thing that wage slavery is, or who smugly found excuses for doing nothing about it. These are the lineal descendants of those who, during

chattel slavery days, expressed objection to slavery, but who objected even more strongly to the "rude" "name-calling" and "impatient" Abolitionists.

The indomitable Wendell Phillips has put in undying words the scorn, the profound contempt, that men like De Leon feel when they are dealing with elements professing indignation for the immoral consequences of wage slavery, but who calmly accept them as something that really does not concern them. In his great speech, "The Abolition Movement," Phillips scathingly arraigned the Websters and their kind for their "cold prayers, mere lip-service," their double talk and philistine smugness. Of Webster, he said that he "indulged now and then in a little easy rhetoric, . . . opens his mouth in 1840, generously contributing his aid to both sides. " And he exclaimed: "These are your statesmen! These men devoted themselves to banks, to the tariff, to internal improvements, to constitutional and financial questions. They said to slavery: 'Back! no entrance here! We pledge ourselves against you.' " And referring to Garrison, Wendell Phillips continued: "And then there came up a humble printer-boy, who whipped them into the traces and made them talk. nothing but slavery. He scattered all these gigantic shadows—tariff, bank, constitutional questions, financial questions—and slavery. . . . came up and filled the whole political horizon."

Yes, even so De Leon stirred against himself those who were made to feel uncomfortable by his insistent attacks on capitalism, by his concrete efforts to organize the working class for emancipation, by his having "taken this country by the four corners, and shaken it until you can hear nothing but wage slav-

ery," to paraphrase the eloquent Wendell Phillips. And for doing so, he was ostracized and disowned by the members of the class into which he was born, he was denied the pursuits and the opportunities to which his learning, sincerity and human decency otherwise would have entitled him. And that conspiracy of silence, which ruling classes know how so well to foster against those whom they fear and cannot answer, was plutocracy's eloquent testimony to De Leon's incorruptible intellect and his sterling integrity. But gladly did De Leon cast his lot with the proletariat—not because he liked poverty better than the rest, not because he did not crave the good things in life, certainly not because he found anything noble in proletarianism *per se*, but because the alternative was an utterly impossible one for one of his nobility of mind, clarity of vision, and integrity of purpose to accept; because that alternative would have made him a slave in a sense more revolting and degrading than to accept the lot of the wage slave.

He would rather be intellectually and spiritually free with the disinherited of the earth, in the service of a minority cause, though he were to suffer ostracism, privations and want, than be the trimmed and chained poodle in the service of the exploiters of the workers. For, as Lowell reminded us: "He's a slave who dare not be, in the right with two or three." Hence De Leon's contempt for those whom sometimes he called "literary prostitutes" was unbounded. And those who affected scorn for the workers, though otherwise professing to champion their cause, would be silenced with this stern and magnificent reproof:

"The working class is **THE** thing. It must effect its own emancipation. Whoever is not of the work-

ing class owes to that class whatever advantages of education he has enjoyed. It should be his pride to bestow such acquisitions upon the working class. If he affects disdain for it, then his acquisitions are worthless, and he is in the Movement only to exploit it."

Yes, De Leon was considered a traitor to his class by his former class associates who failed to perceive the greatness of the man—those who could not grasp the scientific soundness of the principles and program he laid down, or whose material interests blinded them to the truth. But the alienation of his class fellows did not trouble him. What hurt infinitely more was the desertion by those in the Party in whom he had placed trust and faith. In a certain sense he became a lonely man. Though he retained faith in the working class, he nevertheless came to realize that during the formative period of the movement his chief reliance must be in himself. He came to understand the full meaning, and all its implications, of the declaration by Ibsen's rebellious Dr. Stockman: "He is strongest who stands alone."

Misjudged by many of those who at one time or another were his co-workers, and denounced by them as an autocrat, as dictatorial, and betrayed by even some of those nearest and dearest to him, he might well have grown into a bitter and frustrated man. That he did not, is an added testimony to his spiritual and moral greatness. Though he never complained, the fact is that there were few, if any, who gave him wholehearted devotion, and who at the same time possessed sufficient greatness of their own to appraise properly his genius—none with whom he might jointly have explored this or that problem, tested this or that

thesis, or perhaps discussed this or that doubt. He could not do this with those who merely loved him without yet fully comprehending him—and there were, of course, many who worshipped him. He could not do it lest he be misunderstood, lest his confidences be betrayed by erstwhile admirers subsequently turned bitter and implacable De Leon haters. De Leon had no Frederick Engels by his side. In this sense, then, he was a lonely man. And perhaps only those who have suffered similarly can apprehend the cruelty of such loneliness.

IV.

Universal Freedom Rests on Abundance.

In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.—*Karl Marx*.

De Leon's former associates, his erstwhile class fellows, might affect pity or scorn for De Leon in his, to them, strange proletarian environment. But De Leon was no more to be pitied by them than was Henry Thoreau in jail to be pitied by Emerson. The story is told that when Thoreau went to jail rather than pay taxes to support a government which condoned slavery, his friend, Emerson, visited him and pityingly said to him: "Henry, what are *you* doing in there?" To which Thoreau replied: "Waldo, what are *you* doing *out* of here?"

Thus, similarly, De Leon might have rebuked pitying friends of former days. They, not he, deserved pity, or scorn, as might be the case. For they, not he, were morally and intellectually enslaved; he, not they, enjoyed that freedom which moral integrity and clarity of purpose give—the moral integrity, the refusal to barter and compromise with evil, exemplified in the case of Thoreau, and in his counter-question to his friend, Emerson, who, his undoubted greatness notwithstanding, preferred ease and comfort to the hardships which standing up for one's principles carries with it.

The question, then, De Leon was confronted with was: Is the cause of working class emancipation sound and practical? Does it rest on mere sentiment, or is it in the cards of social evolution that the working class is destined to carry forward the program of civilization and, if so, can this be achieved by leaving the workers as wards of capitalism, or, worse still, as wage-serfs of a feudo-industrial class under the system of unrelieved industrial feudalism slowly, but surely, rising on the social horizon? We know the answer De Leon received. As he put it in that magnificent closing speech delivered at the second convention of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1906: "I have no enthusiasm except the enthusiasm that positive knowledge brings; that which brought me into the movement [of working class emancipation], and that which keeps me in the movement—the positive knowledge that this system [of Socialist Industrial Unionism] is correct; that *our* system is correct; that our methods are correct, and that the emancipation of the working class *can* be accomplished. . . ."

And the basis of De Leon's "positive knowledge," of his deep understanding of the fundamental issues involved, was in the economics and sociology of what we know as the science of Marxism, of the laws formulated by Marx, and brought to final flowering by De Leon himself. On the side of economics, De Leon ascertained these facts:

1—That the workers under capitalism are, in effect, so many commodities, bought and sold in the labor market as cattle, calico, corn and potatoes are bought and sold in their respective markets, as chattel slaves were bought and sold in the slave market.

2—That, as commodities, the status of the workers was bound to deteriorate in the measure that their value as commodities decreased, and that that value was bound to decrease precisely to the extent that the economic laws of capitalism operated toward greater productivity, greater concentration of capital, and the inevitable increase of proletarians, with ever swelling armies of unemployed testifying to the fated working out of these economic laws; and that there was no hope, no possibility, of the workers, as a class, ever rising out of their wage-slave status under capitalism, all contentions of scheming capitalists, visionary reformers, or venal labor fakers to the contrary notwithstanding.

On the side of sociology, De Leon ascertained these facts:

1—That society is an organism, and that social systems are subject to the laws of all organisms: birth, growth, maturity, decay and final death.

2—That capitalism had reached that stage where its continued existence spelled reaction, rendering impossible further social progress, with the inescapable stratification, or to use a modern term, "freezing," of social classes as permanent rulers, and a permanent ruled subject or wage-serf class.

3—That reforms designed to alter the private property system, or to alleviate the condition of the subject class, were fatedly doomed to failure—aye, even more: fated to strengthen the position of the ruling class, and worsen the condition of the subject class. He proclaimed the simple, yet profound truth, that "palliatives are palliations of wrong"—that "the palliative ever steels [i.e., strengthens] the wrong

that is palliated"; that "the palliative works the evil of inoculating the revolutionary force with a fundamental misconception of the nature of the foe it has to deal with"; that "nothing is gained on the road of palliatives [i.e., of reform]; all may be lost." He demonstrated that "Where a social revolution is pending and, for whatever reason is not accomplished, reaction is the alternative"; that "every reform granted by capitalism is a concealed measure of reaction." He warned the workers that they must place reliance only in their own organized power and social integrity of purpose, and hold in scorn the proffered would-be support of the ruling class and its henchmen. "Revolutions triumphed," he argued with that conviction born only of deep understanding and profound knowledge of the forces at work, "revolutions triumphed, whenever they did triumph, by asserting themselves and marching straight upon their goal. On the other hand the fate of Wat Tyler [medieval proletarian rebel] ever is the fate of reform. The rebels, in this instance, were weak enough to allow themselves to be wheedled into placing their movement into the hands of Richard II, who promised 'relief'—and brought it by marching the men to the gallows."

A dying social system can never be reformed—it cannot, nor should it, be salvaged. It has fulfilled its mission in the scheme of social evolution. To the scrap-heap with it, there to join the feudal system, and all other antiquities and worn-out and useless relics of civilization!

V.

Wages System Is Slavery.

Machinery, considered alone, shortens the hours of labor, but, when in the service of capital, lengthens them; in itself it lightens labor, but when employed by capital, heightens the intensity of labor; in itself it is a victory of man over the forces of nature, but in the hands of capital, makes man the slave of those forces; in itself it increases the wealth of the producers, but in the hands of capital, makes them paupers.—*Karl Marx.*

In countless articles and speeches De Leon laid down the laws and principles governing the movement of working class emancipation, elucidating and enlarging the subject, ever inspiring the hosts of the proletarian emancipation movement. Lengthy quotations are sometimes tiring, and should generally be avoided, but I cannot forbear to quote to you an editorial which peculiarly brings out the power of De Leon's method of scientific exposition. Moreover, it has (as have most of De Leon's writings) a current and most apposite application. The subject of the editorial, the greater part of which I shall read to you, was "the minimum wage," so-called. In this De Leon synthesized, as he often did, the laws of economics and sociology applicable to the working class movement. Through it speaks the uncompromising Emancipator. These are De Leon's clear and clarifying words:

"The law of value establishes that the amount of labor-power crystallized in a commodity and necessary

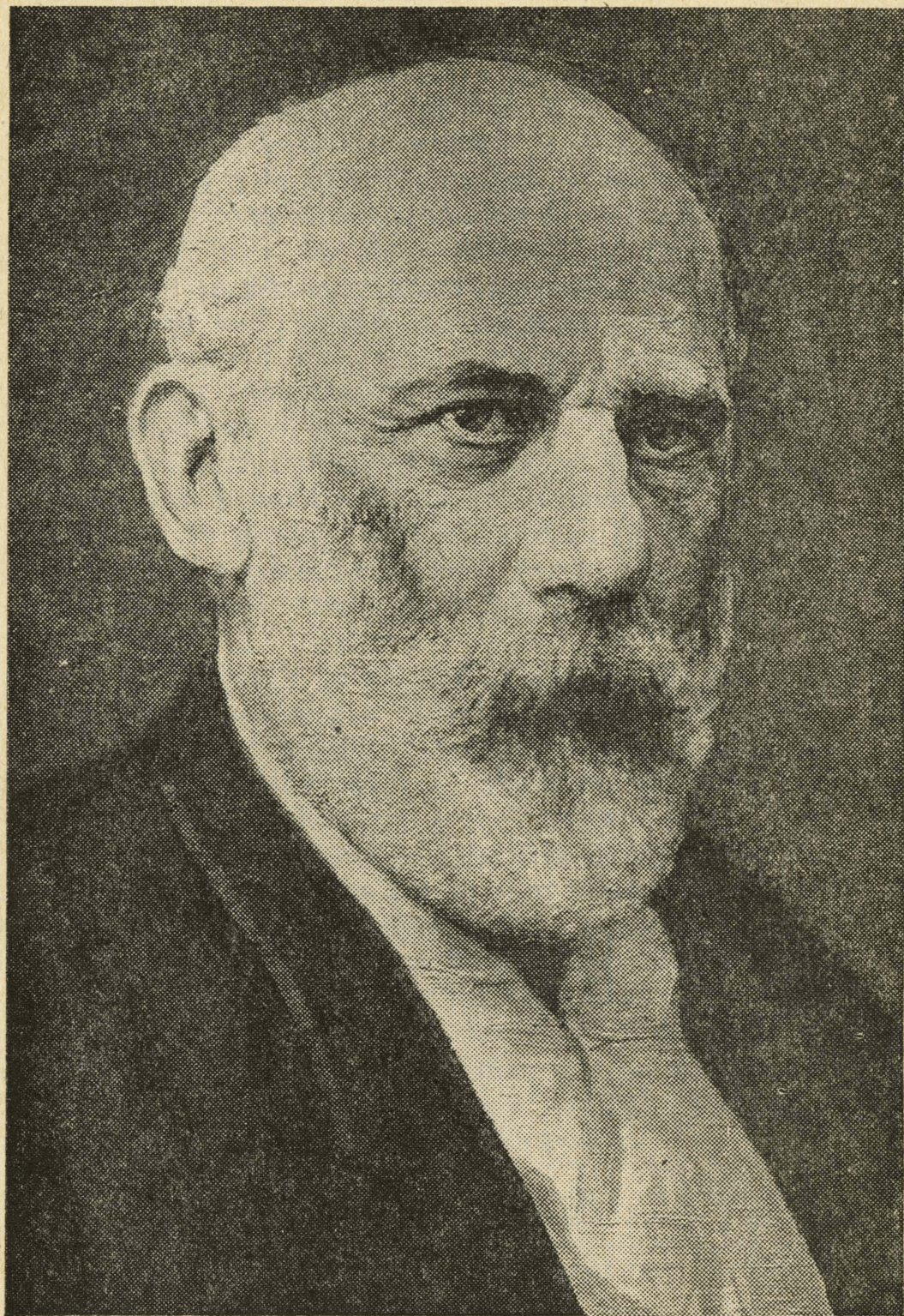
for its reproduction determines the amount of the other commodities with which it is exchangeable—the commodity gold being the medium of such exchange.

“As a consequence of the law of value, the market price, or, price, for short, while it may coincide with value, if supply and demand are equal, is determined by supply and demand—falling with a rise of supply unaccompanied with a proportional rise of demand, and rising with demand, unaccompanied with a proportional rise of supply.

“As a consequence of the laws of value and price, whatever manufacturer, or combination of manufacturers, can produce with less amount of labor-power the goods produced by others, thereby depreciates the price of these others, and thereby bankrupts their producers.

“A factor in production, a factor that partakes of the qualities of raw material, is labor-power. The capitalist must and does purchase the commodity labor-power in the labor market. While the capitalist may like to employ chicanery in the purchase of this commodity, and purchase below the price designated by the value, he is not always able to do so. Supposing a capitalist to purchase labor-power for the price designated by its value, it follows that the lower the value of labor-power all the lower will be the value of the goods that labor-power produces.* A lowering of the value of goods by improved methods that save on the amount of labor-power consumed, has, accordingly, a depressing effect upon the value of labor-power.

*“The value of commodities is in inverse ratio to the productiveness of labor. And so, too, is the value of labor-power, because it depends on the values of commodities.”—Marx, “Capital,” Ch. XII. In other words, the greater the productiveness of labor, the lower the value of commodities, including the commodity labor power.



DANIEL DE LEON

After Oil Painting
by Frederick Precht

WITH A PORTRAIT
of
DANIEL DE LEON

NOT for the clear burning flame of thought,
Not for the keen logician mind;
Not for the system of government wrought,
Not for the task to himself assigned:

*But the warm human heart,
The chuckle that warmed yours in turn;
The rich compassion that set him apart
From those whose fires fruitlessly burn.*

Not for the solemn and reasoning word,
Not for the thesis, learned and keen;
Not for the wrecker of notions absurd,
Not for the teacher of somber mien:

*But the twinkling eye and gay,
The lover of scintillant jests;
The friendly host, whiling hours away,
With stories for merrying guests.*

—A.P.

"The price of labor-power is the wage. The minimum wage cannot choose but be predicated upon a condition of production existing at the time that the minimum wage was fixed. Improved methods of production continuously tend to increase the supply of labor-power above the demand in the labor-market. Thus improved methods of production steadily change the conditions of production under which the minimum wage was at any time fixed.

"What to do?

"Leave the minimum wage stand, and enforce it? —The consequence would be to defeat its own purpose.

"The purpose of the minimum wage is to act as a brake on the workers' standard of living. Improved methods of production lower the value of goods. The capitalists, whose capital does not allow them to operate with the most improved methods available, cannot sell as cheap as the capitalist who operates with improved methods, and they are bankrupted. The bankruptcy of these smaller capitalists lets 'free' the labor they employed. That labor is dumped into the labor-market, and swells the army of the unemployed—an army whose wage is away below the minimum, being zero.

"The boomerang nature of the 'minimum wage' theory arises from its being an attempt to save capitalism from its own consequences—an absurdity.

"From capitalist premises none but capitalist conclusions can be legitimately drawn.

"Capitalism pushes towards improved methods of production whereby to yield increased abundance with decreasing effort. The improved methods depress the value of labor-power. The minimum wage is intended

as a dam—a desirable thing—to stem the flood of the consequences of an overflowing labor-market that results from improved methods; but the very nature of the flood that the dam is intended to stem operates, in turn, as a dam to keep the overstocked labor-market from thinning down. The lesser capitalists are barred by the minimum wage dam from purchasing labor-power at the cheaper rate that they can afford. The final consequence is that the dammed flood is bound to burst the artificial barrier of the minimum wage.

“A ‘minimum wage’ that is not daily adjustable, like the price of bullion, is self-destructive.

“A ‘minimum wage’ that is daily adjustable like the price of gold would not be self-destructive, but is an impossibility—no mercantile contract would be possible under it.

“A ‘minimum wage,’ supposing the economic folly thereof to be extractable therefrom, would check the course of civilization, seeing that it would render improved methods nugatory. No law that bucks the unwritten law which decrees improved methods can stand.

“Finally, the only remaining chance of the ‘minimum wage’ would be for the social organism which enacts the minimum wage itself to furnish employment as fast as the supply in the labor-market would tend to depress wages below the established minimum. Such a process would gradually bring the bulk of the proletariat in the direct employment of the Government of the Political or Class State—the goal consciously aimed at by the [Theodore] Roosevelt [“Progressive”] party, and unconsciously led to by the so-called Socialist party—a goal known as State Socialism [rather, State Capitalism], under which the proletariat would be re-

reduced to the status of feudal serfs, with all the ignominy to the serfs that feudal serfdom implied. . . .

"The Minimum Wage Law, the same as all other Labor Laws, is unenforceable in the absence of an enlightened working class movement, due to the all-powerful natural tendencies of capitalism towards the violation of such laws. . . .

"We are considering the Minimum Wage Law as a means of raising the price of Labor Power. Historically speaking every such attempt on the part of the working class to make its commodity Labor Power more costly to the employing class was usually met by an increased tendency toward installation of labor-saving machinery and other improvements. . . .

"The legal 'minimum wage' idea sprung up first in the head of unenlightened proletarians. By its means they imagine they can permanently relieve their condition with the aid of capitalist law. The error is seized upon by capitalist elements who ply upon the workers' ignorance with plausible nostrums frequently advanced 'in the name of God,' that is, the God of Capital.

"To the extent that a minimum wage law is enforced it redounds ultimately to the advantage of the capitalist, with worse conditions for the workers. To the extent that anything, even remotely bearing the semblance of a 'minimum wage law,' does not tend ultimately to reduce the social status of the proletariat, the thing requires no law; to call the thing a 'law' is a snare. Its execution must be left in the hands of the Union, backed and shielded by its political expression, —and then the thing is. . . . a sliding scale rising progressively upward as the Union may order, unhampered by any binding contract.

"In other words, the 'minimum wage' has no place

in a political party of Labor. Such a party can only blaze the Revolution, full fledged, by preaching it, and teaching how to organize it. The 'minimum wage' has its place only in the Union's daily struggle—and then the 'minimum' means 'all that you can get'—it is a 'maximum,' and not a 'minimum.'

"Well may the Taft, Roosevelt and Wilson parties, together with the [Ultramontane] Professors Ryan, run the 'Minimum Wage' flag up the foremast of their sundry crafts. Well may the so-called Socialist party [and now also the Stalinist swindlers] assume the identical motto. The criminal ignorance of the latter, the criminal purpose of the former, both flow from one headspring—the bourgeois class blindness: and both flow into one general ocean—proletarian subjugation.

"The emancipation of the Working Class, thereby the redemption of society, knows no motto with the word 'Wage' in it, except it be in the combination:

" 'Down, never more to rise, with the Wage System!' "

VI.

The Essence of Slavery.

It is a fact generally known that, the longer the working days, in any branch of industry, the lower are the wages....In capitalist society spare time [leisure] is acquired for one class by converting the whole life-time of the masses into labor-time.—*Karl Marx*.

In this closely reasoned editorial De Leon at once laid bare the nature of the slavery imposed on the workers by capitalism, warned against the pitfalls placed in their path by the ignorant reformers, and sounded the tocsin of revolt against the system which rendered that slavery as inevitable as it is intolerable; finally emphasizing that the badge of that slavery is the wage received by the workers—the price paid them for their labor power, the use value of which the capitalist class exploits to the full limit. The essence of that slavery is the surplus labor time which the workers are compelled, under penalty of death or starvation, to give the owning, the ruling class, and for which that class pays nothing—the value of which the capitalists extract and retain solely by virtue of their ownership of the socially produced, socially operated, and socially necessary instruments of production. Precisely as the Southern slave-owner extracted the values produced by slave labor over and above the cost of feeding and maintaining the chattel slave. To appropriate the wealth produced by the slaves over and above their cost of subsistence has ever been the mark of, as

it has been the motivating factor present in all systems of slavery, including wage slavery, the wage system, or capitalism. As Marx put it concisely:

“Capital has not invented surplus-labor [i.e., labor rendered without cost to the capitalist]. Wherever a part of society possesses the means of production, the laborer, free or not free, must add to the working time necessary for his own maintenance an extra working time in order to produce the means of subsistence for the owners of the means of production, whether this proprietor be the Athenian *καλὸς κἀγαθός*,* Etruscan theocrat, *civis Romanus*, Norman baron, American slave owner, Wallachian Boyard, modern landlord or capitalist.”

Herbert Spencer has provided us with one of the most comprehensive definitions of slavery extant, and this notwithstanding his violent opposition to Socialism. In his “Coming Slavery” he observed that “That which fundamentally distinguishes the slave is that he labors under coercion to satisfy another’s desires.” Amplifying this, he added: “The essential question is—How much is he [the slave] compelled to labor for other benefit than his own, and how much can he labor for his own benefit? The degree of his slavery varies according to the ratio between that which he is forced to yield up and that which he is allowed to retain; and it matters not whether his master is a single person or a society [or class].”

The struggle between masters and slaves (apart from the struggle to overthrow the slave system) has always been the struggle over the wealth produced by the slaves, or (which comes to the same thing) the

**Kalos Kagathos*—a member of the ancient Greek ruling class.

struggle over the division of the working time. In absolute slavery the question was simple: The master simply fed his slaves as he fed his horses and cattle—sometimes not as well.* But he fed him out of the produce of the slave—obviously. Under feudalism the serf worked two or three days for his own maintenance, the rest of the week's working time was yielded without cost to the baron. Under capitalism the worker produces the equivalent of his own weekly wages in, say, one day; the rest of the week he works without cost to the capitalist master. In other words, the capitalist pays the worker for his use value which it takes the worker one day to produce or reproduce; having bought the worker's use value for a week, he keeps for himself the proceeds of that use value for the rest of the week. In short, working one day for himself, and, say, five days for the capitalist, the worker retains 1/6 of the product of his week's labor.

This is slavery as defined by Spencer. And it is slavery howsoever, or by whomsoever, defined. The difference under modern capitalism is that the slavery is concealed under the wage form. For, ostensibly, the worker is paid in full when he receives his week's wage. Actually he is not. If the worker were paid the equivalent of his total labor, the capitalist would have nothing to show for his investment. The most

*All labor appears as paid labor....In slave-labor, even that part of the working day in which the slave is only replacing the value of his own means of existence, in which, therefore, in fact, he works for himself alone, appears as labor for his master. All the slave's labor appears as unpaid labor. In wage labor, on the contrary, even surplus labor, or unpaid labor, appears as paid. There [under slave labor] the property relation conceals the labor of the slave for himself; here [under capitalism] the money-relation conceals the unrequited labor of the wage-laborer.—Karl Marx, "Capital," Ch. XIX.

he would have would be the return of his investment, but no profits, no surplus value.

And the capitalist knows this full well, and that is why he struggles so hard against reduction in the working time, or against wage increases. For both spell reduction in profits, all the fake contentions concerning higher wages causing higher prices notwithstanding. Higher wages (other things being equal) simply mean that the worker is yielding fewer hours of unrewarded labor to the capitalist. As Marx expressed it: "...the philistine and vulgar economist.....forget.....that when they compute the *paid-for labor* under the name of *wages*, they compute the *unpaid-for* under the name of *profit*...."

To maintain the illusion that the modern wage worker is free and independent is an essential task of the capitalist, and he has at his service a host of professors and writers to aid him in that task. It is easy to prove that the worker is not a slave in the sense that he is not actually encumbered by chains, as was the chattel slave. But the chains that bind the wage worker are far stronger than those which fettered the chattel slave. "The Roman slave," wrote Marx, "was held by fetters: the wage laborer is bound to his owner by invisible threads. The appearance of independence is kept up by means of a constant change of employers, and by the *fictio juris* of a contract." The important thing to remember is that it is the working class *as a class* which is exploited, hence enslaved, by the capitalist class *as a class*. And there is no escape from this slavery while capitalism, and capitalist relations, exist.

The capitalists and their spokesmen never tire of telling their workers that they simply cannot afford to pay higher wages, or to shorten the working week. "If

we accede to your requests," they moan, "we shall be losing money—we shall be forced to close our plants." We hear it on every side at this time, in the great struggle taking shape between the mammoth corporations (General Motors, United States Steel, etc.) and the rebelling workers, who are prodding their capitalist-minded "leaders" to present their demands. The capitalist apologists laboriously attempt to prove that their masters would be bankrupted if an increase of, say, 30 per cent is granted to the workers. One of these, one Peter Drucker, wrote recently in the *Saturday Evening Post*: "Out of each dollar available after obligations to outside suppliers and creditors had been paid, ninety-two cents went to labor in the form of wages." This bit of pure humbug is offered quite solemnly by the amazing Mr. Drucker. He goes even further—of the remaining 8 per cent, he says, more than half "was not profit available to the shareholders and owners, but had to be plowed back into the business for future expansion from which [he alleged] labor benefits as much as shareholders."

The gentleman "proves" a little too much—he is overplaying the act. He practically "proves" that it is the working class that is exploiting the poor down-trodden plutocrats! Who does he think the "suppliers and creditors" are—proletarians?! And whose plants of production are improved and enhanced in value by the amount "plowed back"? Are they the property of the capitalists or of the workers? And as for the government, and all the retainers of the capitalist class (editors, pulpiteers, radio commentators, advertisers, etc., etc., etc.)—who pays the enormous cost of this horde of unproductive special pleaders? Obviously, they are paid out of the wealth produced by labor, out

of the share retained, that is, stolen, by the capitalist class. None of these constitute legitimate charges against industry proper—the recipients are the collective sharers in the surplus value produced by the workers collectively. *They are part and parcel of the set-up which reduces and maintains the working class in wage slavery.*

The not very ingenious, and wholly unoriginal, Mr. Drucker tells his cockeyed world that “Even if we distributed all business profits to labor, wages would only be increased by less than 4 per cent as against the 30 per cent increase demanded by the unions.” In other words, if the workers were to compromise their demands by accepting an increase of only 5 per cent, poor “business” would henceforth be operating at a loss of 1 per cent! What Mr. Drucker in effect is arguing is that in the last 4 per cent of the working day the capitalist makes his profits, and that unless the working day is extended he will go bankrupt. The plutocratic pleader evidently does not know that he is repeating in substance the argument made a century ago by one Nassau W. Senior who, as Marx caustically said, “was summoned from Oxford to Manchester, to learn in the latter place, the political economy that he taught in the former.” At that time there was a strong agitation for a ten-hour working day—that is, for a reduction of one hour in the working day. Senior’s task was to prove that to reduce the working day by one hour would produce utter, utter ruin for the so-called employing class, and that it would, moreover, put an end to industrial expansion, to all future progress, and to civilization itself! He set about his task bravely. How he did it, and what Marx did to Senior, is too long a story for this occasion. But the essence of

his claim was that in that last hour (the eleventh hour) the capitalist made his profit, and giving that hour to the worker would mean no profits to the poor capitalist!

We know now that the capitalist class weathered the ten-hour day, as well as the eight-hour day, and that it will weather any other partial reduction in the working time of its slaves (or an increase in wages)—anything, indeed, short of the workers claiming the full proceeds of their entire working day! And the capitalists will accept, if they must, any terms by the workers, except being thrown off labor's back where they now ride with such profit to themselves, if not always in undisturbed comfort! And the Seniors and the Druckers will come and go, until the end of capitalism, serving up their economic hash for those illiterate and simple enough to pay for it and swallow it. For, as Marx said, "the love of lucre induces an easy belief in such miracles, and sycophant doctrinaires [such as the Seniors and Druckers] are never wanting to prove them...."

VII.

Wage Slavery and Its Defenders.

When the workers are paid in return for their labor only as much money as will buy the necessities of life, their condition is identical with that of the slave.—
John Adams.

Slavery has never wanted in hireling defenders, and wage slavery is no exception, as De Leon proved again and again. One after another they would appear, selling their services to the highest plutocratic bidder. Intellectual dishonesty was ever the outstanding characteristic of most of them, and many of them were incredibly stupid—or, at least, they presented arguments so stupid that it seemed impossible for the next one to better the performance. And although their arguments rarely varied from those of their predecessors, whether advanced in defense of capitalism, or in attempted refutation of Socialism, they were generally hailed as new prophets, as the saviors of the capitalist slave system. Renegades, would-be Socialists, earned their hire—and the contempt of all decent men—as renegades and traitors have done since time immemorial. And neither the character of the sycophants, nor the stupidity or ineffectiveness of their defense of wage slavery, has changed in any essential degree since Marx's and De Leon's time.

One of the latest of these stupid or inept defenders is an Austrian hack named Hayek, who recently received glowing praise and loud acclaim from the

plutocrats and their journalistic spokesmen, but who already seems to have been forgotten. Certainly, he is not worth the bestowal of much attention, yet a few words by way of illustrating the character and method of this latest wage-slavery defender may not be wholly amiss in a consideration of working class emancipation, and its foremost champion in this country, Daniel De Leon. The theme of the gentleman, his thesis, is that Socialism is an illusion when it is not a means of sending society on the "road to serfdom," to use his own phrase. He "proves" his thesis by completely ignoring Marxian Socialism, and by demonstrating that state control will enslave us all, a conclusion not disputed by Marxists. In so far as he mentions Marxism specifically, he does so by identifying it with every un-Socialist or anti-Socialist advocate and their reactionary schemes. He is a shallow thinker, and largely ignorant of social science.*

He attacks Socialist democratic collectivism as unworkable and then proceeds to prove his point by showing that state despotic collectivism won't work! He expresses abhorrence for economic planning by political boards and bureaus, as if these constituted the framework of Socialism! He hails competition as the preserver of individual freedom, apparently oblivious

*Since this address was prepared, a reply to Hayek's stupidly sycophantic effort has appeared. In a book entitled "Road to Reaction," the author, a British professor of Political Science, has neatly and correctly summed up the charlatanism of the now thoroughly deflated Austrian hack writer in the following characterization: "Hayek's apparatus of learning is deficient, his reading incomplete, his understanding of the economic process bigoted, his account of history false, his political science is almost nonexistent, his terminology misleading, his comprehension of British and American political procedure and mentality grossly defective; and his attitude to average men and women is truculently authoritarian." ("Road to Reaction," by Dr. Herman Finer, Visiting Professor of Political Science at Harvard University.)

to the fact that modern capitalism, with all its evils and contradictions, is the logical result of that competition, even as it has inescapably led to the present state of denial of individualism and freedom to the bulk of the population, the working class. In short, he argues for the preservation of the tree of capitalism while rejecting its logical, decayed fruit.

In this, of course, he is neither original nor unique. The "Socialism" he envisions is concerned with such exclusively capitalist elements as capital, prices, commodities, wages, and all the other attributes of a typical capitalist society. The fraudulent nature of such a line of argumentation should be obvious to any thinking person. He treats us to such banalities as this one: "There are few socialists today who believe that in a socialist society the output of each industry would be entirely shared by the workers of that industry [!]; for this would mean that workers in industries using a great deal of capital would have a much larger income than those in industries using little capital, which most socialists would regard as very unjust."!! And much more of such vulgar capitalist tripe. It is as if we were to visualize a defender of feudalism arguing against a proponent of capitalist principles by demonstrating that capitalist principles could not possibly run feudal society, and that to attempt it would mean the enslavement or extinction of the privileged feudal class! To which the revolutionary capitalist would have answered: "So what?" And so say we to the Hayeks and their capitalist masters.

He cites freely, and with great admiration, such renegades and plutocratic poodles as Walter Lippmann and Max Eastman. He has the impudence to refer to Eastman as "Lenin's old friend"—Lenin, who prob-

ably never even heard of the mountebank, and who certainly loathed the type! He remarks that Eastman "found himself compelled to admit that 'instead of being better, Stalinism is worse than fascism'" Renegades are not generally supposed to feel themselves "compelled to admit" that which they eagerly strive to proclaim; and in any case it is interesting, to say the least, to learn that to prove Stalinism, i.e., anti-Marxism, "worse than fascism," is to prove that Marxism won't work!

And this shoddy argumentation, this arrant nonsense, is crowned with the idiotic statement that Fichte, Rodbertus and Lassalle are the "acknowledged fathers of socialism." Fichte was an eminent 18th century German philosopher, but as remote from Marxian Socialism as the 18th century is from the 20th! Rodbertus was a German who claimed priority to one of Marx's greatest discoveries in economic science, but who was proved a fool and a false pretender by Frederick Engels! And Ferdinand Lassalle (his other virtues notwithstanding), who was the collaborator of Bismarck, and the very antithesis of Marxism, hence of modern scientific Socialism! These three, the "acknowledged fathers of socialism."!!!

Aside from naming these three "acknowledged fathers of socialism," Mr. Hayek also designates them as "the most important ancestors of National Socialism"—i.e., Nazism. It is utterly stupid to speak of any person in the past as an "ancestor" of Nazism since Nazism is nothing else than capitalism in its rotten-ripe, decadent stage. But naming these three at the same time "ancestors" of Nazism and "fathers" of Socialism, the Austrian sycophant seeks to establish that Nazism and Socialism spring from the same roots! The

ignorance revealed in calling Fichte, Rodbertus and Lassalle "acknowledged fathers of socialism" proves this "professor" of the latest "Austrian School of Economics" a charlatan and an irresponsible windbag.

Of such is the kingdom of capitalism, and these are its major prophets—the "mountainous" intellects on the dreary level plains of the "system of free enterprise"! These are the defenders of capitalist wage slavery, now as in the days of De Leon who, as foremost champion of working class emancipation, encountered the same or similar gentry and routed them as the paid hirelings of plutocratic wage slavery that they were.

VIII.

Socialism versus Criminal Capitalism.

The modern worker....instead of rising with the progress in industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident that the capitalist class is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an over-riding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state that it has to feed him instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this capitalist class; in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.—*Marx and Engels.*

The struggle for the emancipation of an enslaved class is not merely the struggle against the slave-holding class, but also against certain elements among those professing to champion the cause of the oppressed class, some of them insincere and scheming, but many of them sincere though impatient and lacking in understanding of the nature of the problem before them. During the Civil War, there was the case of John Brown, an outstanding opponent of chattel slavery, but one wholly lacking in comprehension of how to combat and overcome the evil of slavery. His individualistic efforts directed against slavery may be likened to the act of certain reformers who resort to violence in the hope of effecting their reforms. For though John Brown thundered against slavery, his ef-

forts were directed not primarily toward abolishing slavery as an institution, but toward freeing particular slaves—efforts that were fated to retard the anti-slavery movement, if not to strengthen slavery itself.

Lincoln's comment on John Brown's individualistic effort is revealing, and is applicable to similar efforts directed against wage slavery: "John Brown's effort was peculiar," said Lincoln. "It was not a slave insurrection. It was an attempt by white men to get up a revolt among slaves, in which the slaves refused to participate. In fact, it was so absurd that the slaves, with all their ignorance, saw plainly enough it could not succeed. That affair [continued Lincoln], in its philosophy, corresponds with the many attempts, related in history, at the assassination of kings and emperors. An enthusiast broods over the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate them. He ventures the attempt, which ends in little else than his own execution." And Lincoln added elsewhere: "We agree with Brown in his anti-slavery stand. We disagree with him in his methods of violence."

De Leon similarly contended against the physical-force elements in what had become the anarcho-syndicalist I.W.W.—those who boasted that they would strike at the ballot box with an ax, and some of whose followers met a violent end for their violence—who died violently because they failed to understand the nature of the foe, and the complexities of the social problem, and who held in scorn the scientific and civilized method outlined by De Leon for achieving the emancipation of the working class. "Retrace your steps, ye impatient ones," De Leon would plead. But he was dealing with angry men, men whose anger and

frustrated egos made them blind and heedless. "Angry men," he said, "can't reason, and can't be reasoned with."

De Leon profoundly understood that individualistic acts could only lead to disaster. Organization was essential—indeed, without proper organization the emancipation of the workers would remain a pious wish. Organization was essential, not alone on the road to emancipation, but in order to maintain the emancipated class in undisputed power after victory, and in order to supply the framework for the new society. "A good public aim," he wrote, "like a good public aspiration, is but hot air, unless embodied in an organization so constructed that it can promote the aim. All else is preaching in the wilderness. . . ." And elsewhere he wrote:

"The Socialist is called upon to perform the culminating social revolution of the Ages. The Socialist is, accordingly, the highest flower developed on the tree of social evolution. As such, a distinctive feature of the Socialist is the recognition of the necessity of organization. The recognition of this necessity implies the necessity of the most perfect form of organization. Seeing that to combat capitalism with the craft union is like combating Krupp cannons with the bow and arrow, the Socialist is in duty bound to seek to substitute the craft union form of organization with that of the Industrial Union."

If this was true in the days of De Leon—and no sensible Marxist would deny it—it is much more so in these days of radio, radar and the atomic bomb. Indeed, it is devoutly to be wished that the emancipation of the working class may be achieved before the principle of atomic energy has been put to practical ap-

plication, especially if that application be for vastly greater destructive purposes, as at this stage seems likely. But, surely, at this stage, it needs no labored argument to demonstrate that violence in order to promote working class emancipation would be, not merely the act of impatient fools, but the act of criminal fools or scoundrels.

The capitalist class is a criminal class—it is a class outlawed, so to speak, by social evolution. But it is also a desperate class, a class which, in the last analysis, will stop at nothing to maintain its rule and power. And violence, barbarous violence, will be its answer to the civilized verdict at the ballot box, unless the workers are sufficiently organized in Socialist Industrial Unions to crush any attempted “pro-slavery rebellion” by the outlawed capitalist class. The global war that has just ended shows to what savage extremes the criminal capitalist class will go to protect its interests. Yet the capitalist class would disavow responsibility for the terrible world slaughter. But it is hard put to it to escape its responsibility, since wars do not happen mysteriously, and the age is too enlightened to have them attributed to the wrath of an outraged divinity.

The fact is that in summing up the alleged virtues of the system, wars, unemployment and social diseases constitute proper charges against capitalism’s account. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” and the recent universal carnage and orgy of destruction represent the latest, and the most horrible, fruit of the tree of capitalism. It has just been disclosed that the total cost of the war—including so-called victors and vanquished—amounted to one trillion and three hundred and eighty-four billions of dollars! The figure is staggering—the human mind fails to comprehend it. But

think of the difference if that sum had been applied to Socialist reconstruction purposes instead of for the purpose of destruction of lives and wealth, to the end of prolonging capitalism's criminal existence. To say nothing of the millions slain in this most criminal and most ghastly war of the most criminal of all slave systems!

And yet there are those who speak of reforming the monster—of making this wreck, this outdated relic, workable again! The ancient Greeks had a saying: "Reforming old men is like healing a corpse." Reforming capitalism is like healing the putrid, stinking corpse of a defunct organism! Again we say: "Away with it—make way for the sound and healthy body of international Socialism, the guarantor and promoter of human freedom, of universal peace, of social and individual health, affluence and happiness!" The emancipation of the working class spells the emancipation of the human race, and is the only means of saving modern civilization!

IX.

Daniel De Leon, Immortal.

We must some day, at last and forever, cross the line between Nonsense and Common Sense. And on that day we shall pass from Class Paternalism, originally derived from fetish fiction in times of universal ignorance, to Human Brotherhood in accordance with the nature of things and our growing knowledge of it; from Political Government to Industrial Administration; from Competition in Individualism to Individuality in Cooperation; from War and Despotism, in any form, to Peace and Liberty.—*Thomas Carlyle*.

Daniel De Leon never tired of exhorting the wage slaves to revolt against the inhuman conditions imposed upon them by capitalism. A contented slave was to him at once an object of pity and abhorrence. In his masterly address, "What Means This Strike," he has in ringing words sounded the tocsin of revolt and emancipation. His stirring words move us today as they must have moved the striking workers to whom they were addressed nearly fifty years ago, and as they undoubtedly shall move countless workers yet ere the bells of social revolution have tolled the victory of Socialism over capitalism:

"The superficial observer who looks back to your [i.e., the strikers'] attitude during that strike, who looks back to your attitude during the strikes that preceded that one, who now turns his eyes to your attitude in the present strike, and who discovers substantially no difference between your attitude now and then

might say, 'Why, it is a waste of time to speak to such men; they learn nothing from experience; they will eternally fight the same hopeless battle; the battle to establish "safe relations" with the capitalist class, with the same hopeless weapon: the "pure and simple" organization of labor!' But the Socialist does not take that view. There is one thing about your conduct that enlists for and entitles you to the warm sympathy of the Socialist, and that is that, despite your persistent errors in fundamental principles, in aims and methods, despite the illusions that you are chasing after, despite the increasing poverty and cumulating failures that press upon you, despite all that you preserve manhood enough not to submit to oppression, but rise in the rebellion that is implied in a strike. The attitude of workingmen engaged in a bona fide strike is an inspiring one. It is an earnest that slavery will not prevail. The slave alone who will not rise against his master, who will meekly bend his back to the lash and turn his cheek to him who plucks his beard—that slave alone is hopeless. But the slave, who persists, despite failures and poverty, in rebelling, there is always hope for."

This is the language not of the "friend of labor," but of one who is of the very essence of the working class itself. Daniel De Leon was truly cast in the mold of the Emancipator. All his life he hated slavery, and consciously or otherwise fought it. There lies before me a publication entitled *The Journalist*, a non-Socialist periodical of some fifty years and more ago. The date of this particular issue is July 7, 1900. It contains a front-page article on Daniel De Leon and on the then just newly born DAILY PEOPLE. It briefly

relates the story of De Leon. It describes him in terms such as these:

"A man of strong mentality, normal physically with a nature open and direct as that of the wholesome child. A genial personality similar to those which under different conditions become princes of social life..

"But this man is no Sybarite. He is terribly in earnest, but in him the fires of enthusiasm are tempered by a supremely cool intelligence which checks the tendency to degenerate into fanaticism."

The writer of this article goes on to quote one whom he calls "a graphic writer," who described the appearance of De Leon at that time:

"This Socialist's face is very striking. A naturally high forehead, emphasized by a benign baldness; a silver beard dark at the roots, clustering grizzled locks about the ears; a complexion clear as a boy's; the nose handsome in profile, but, like Byron's, too thick on front view for absolute handsomeness; a shapely, mobile, eloquent looking mouth; heavy yet constantly gesticulative eyebrows, and a pair of eyes brimming with power and beauty. Remarkable eyes of a very light gray, clear as crystal and intensely luminous under dark lashes. When he speaks they suggest diamondine daggers leaping from coal-black sheaths."

Graphic, indeed! This writer concludes his description of De Leon on this note:

"A wonderful face is this, at once old and young. The voice matches it though much open-air oratory has given a tinge of resonance to some of its rich intonations. It is a costly organ, for this irrepressible voice of De Leon has cost its owner a snug little in-

come of \$5,000 a year and the official dignity of being a professor at Columbia College."

Yes, this "irrepressible voice" was a costly, a precious organ, for it spoke powerfully and incessantly, and in accents of authority and deep knowledge, the message of emancipation for the latest and last slave class in social evolution, the wage slave class. And if we are to believe the story told by the writer, Henry Austin, as reported in *The Journalist* article, then De Leon spoke, not merely incessantly and powerfully, but early and logically, in behalf of the enslaved. The story told by Henry Austin concerns an amusing incident of De Leon's boyhood. It may be apocryphal—it may be one of the legends that grow up around great men. Then, again, the story may be entirely true. At any rate, we accept it as such. This is the *Journalist* writer speaking:

It appears that some of the black slaves of Curacao cast themselves into the sea in the hope of drifting to liberty. "This wilful destruction of property by property," says Mr. Austin, "happened to a planter whom the De Leons were visiting when Daniel was about seven. One morning the host, Mynheer Kapptal, began bewailing the wickedness of a slave named Sebastopol who had thus escaped. 'Why, it was only yesterday I gave the thankless scoundrel an old suit of clothes!'

" 'Is it possible?' cried a sympathetic guest, 'what black ingratitude!'

" 'Yes, and last week I gave him some boots, and last Christmas a bottle of rum, and my wife sometimes let him fan her, because he could fan more steadily

than her maid. Why, I was always giving him things; in fact gave him everything he needed.'

" 'But did you ever give him his freedom?' piped out a boyish treble. All eyes turned and stared and glared at the young Venezuelan. Then the shocked silence was broken by the planter saying solemnly to Daniel's father: 'Look out for that boy. I fear he is destined to go to the bad.' "

Yes, the master of the slave will do anything for him—anything, except to get off his back. And so it is with the present-day capitalist class and its defenders. And we may well believe that De Leon learned that lesson well in early life, for working class emancipation was a sociologic truth which he emphasized throughout his active life. Hence, he proclaimed on all occasions: "The emancipation of the working class must be the classconscious act of the working class itself." And he coupled it with this other: "The proletarian army of emancipation cannot consist in a dumb driven herd." Unorganized, the workers are just that—a dumb, that is, inarticulate driven herd. Organized, organized in Socialist Industrial Unions, as outlined by Daniel De Leon, the exploited workers become a power before whom despots tremble and empires tumble, and in fear of whom cowards and traitors scramble for safety.

The strength and hope of the workers lie in the mighty Union, blueprinted and infused with the breath of life by Daniel De Leon, Emancipator and Social Architect. But the actual structure of that Union is yet to be built, and it must be built by the workers themselves—it must be a Union of, by and for the working class, resting on the principle of proletarian

emancipation. Meanwhile, until it is built, the Socialist Labor Party will carry forward the Emancipation Movement initiated in this country by De Leon, heedless of the opposition of the sincerely ignorant and maliciously obstructive alike—heedless of the conspiracy of silence worked upon the Party of De Leon by the cunning foe. When they assure themselves that the S.L.P. is dead, it is but the whistling of a little boy passing a graveyard. It is the wish that is father to the thought. The S.L.P. is as indestructible as are the program and principles formulated by the great Proletarian Emancipator. De Leon himself has, in ringing words, poured scorn on those who pronounced the S.L.P. dead. Thirty-seven years ago he wrote:

“Periodically, . . . since its start, the ‘passing of the S.L.P.’ has been predicted; and the obscene birds of the political forest, deceived by the falling of dry leaves, and too near-sighted to detect the spread and strengthening fiber of the growing roots underneath, cawed back the silly prophecy. The S.L.P. will accomplish its task. And when that task shall have been performed; when the Socialist Republic shall have been reared, beneath whose dome no slave shall bend, and the Working Class, and, with it, Humanity, shall have at last been emancipated;—when that task shall be done, then the Socialist Labor Party will take its place in a niche of the Pantheon where are enshrined the immortals that fought and dared for the human race, and that achieved success.

“The ‘passing of the S.L.P.’?”

“The S.L.P. is immortal.”

They say, too, that De Leon is dead—as they say that Marx is dead—that he has been dead a long time.

Fools, blind fools, who cannot perceive that De Leon never died—who cannot comprehend that he lives with undiminished vitality in the virile S.L.P. movement of today, lives in the hearts and minds and spirits of the living militant men and women who ceaselessly carry forward his great idea; dullards, who do not sense or feel his breath through the mighty silent forces that are wrecking the capitalist slave system and preparing the groundwork and rearing the structure of the new society of Emancipated Labor! And so, in closing, I should like to paraphrase the last part of De Leon's magnificent declaration:

“When the task of working class emancipation shall have been accomplished, then the Emancipator of the Proletariat, Daniel De Leon, will take his place in a niche of the Pantheon where are enshrined the immortals that fought and dared for the human race, and that achieved enduring success.

“‘Daniel De Leon dead’?

“Daniel De Leon is immortal.”

(The End.)

Urged on by want the worker multiplies the disastrous [disastrous to the individual worker] effects of division of labor. The result is: *the more he works, the less wages he receives*. And for this simple reason: the more he works, the more he competes against his fellow workmen, the more he compels them to compete against him, and to offer themselves on the same wretched condition as he does; so that, in the last analysis, *he competes against himself as a member of the working class*.

*

The essential difference between the various economic forms of society, between, for instance, a society based on slave labor, and one based on wage labor, lies only in the mode in which this surplus-labor is in each case extracted from the actual producer, the laborer.

*

Wages and profits....stand in inverse proportion to each other. The share of capital (profit) increases in the same proportion in which the share of labor (wages) falls, and vice versa. Profit rises in the same degree in which wages fall; it falls in the same degree in which wages rise.

*

If capital grows rapidly, wages may rise, but the profit of capital rises disproportionately faster. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The social chasm that separates him from the capitalist has widened.

—KARL MARX.

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